



Combined Joint Task Force

Operation Inherent Resolve
APO AE 09306

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Inside the Coalition to defeat ISIL

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SOUTHWEST ASIA – Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve is the US-led Coalition’s response to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), often referred to as Daesh.

Formed in October 2014 to counter ISIL’s sweeping takeover of territory in Iraq and Syria last summer, the Task Force brings to bear more than 60 countries in the fight against ISIL.

“The Coalition exists to counter Daesh in Iraq (and) Syria. Those operations (conducted) in Syria enable Iraqi Security Forces, as they force Daesh to re-allocate their resources to the Syrian theater. All of our coalition contributions are directed at achieving success in our mission, which is to degrade and ultimately defeat Daesh,” said Brig. Gen. Thomas Weidley, the chief of staff for CJTF-OIR.

The most visible action taken has been in the form of airstrikes. CJTF-OIR has relied on its coalition air superiority, launching more than 3,200 airstrikes against Islamic State targets in both Iraq and Syria since operations began in August 2014.

“Our deliberate targeting process involves many levels of review. We look at those targets for hours and hours to understand the pattern of life, and all airstrikes in Iraq are approved by the Ministry of Defense,” said Weidley. “It’s a process that’s resulted in airstrike success across Iraq and Syria.”

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The Coalition's other main effort is training the ISF through a program called Building Partner Capacity (BPC). The Coalition has nearly a thousand military trainers and advisers in Iraq at five separate Build Partner Capacity sites. There, they train Iraqi and Kurdish security forces through four to six-week periods of instruction to prepare them for offensive operations against ISIL.

The BPC site trainers are comprised of a host of countries.

"We developed the BPC construct to allow coalition trainers to go into Iraq at agreed upon sites and get (the ISF) capable of taking on (ISIL)," said Weidley. "We're not building U.S. equivalent units."

Weidley sees the defeat of ISIL resting largely on the Coalition's ability to build the military capacity of Iraq.

"(BPC) allows us to latch on to an equivalent entity and provide that guidance, assistance and perspective," he said. "We continue to push more units through our BPC sites. Combine that with the enablers we bring – fires, intelligence, partnership at the headquarters level – helps generate momentum. ISF has continued to counter ISIL's episodic attacks."

He added that the BPC mission has continued to build Iraq's military capabilities, citing the development of small unit leaders and the ability to conduct counter IED and obstacle clearing and breaching.

The strategy has been embraced by Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter.

He said to troops during his visit to the region that a lasting defeat against ISIL requires the military capacity of local forces "because they must take the lead and take responsibility."

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Iraqi army soldiers with 73rd Brigade, 15th Division, look on as instructors from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, discuss movement techniques and squad level tactics at a training area on Camp Taji, Iraq, March 24, 2015. The 3rd Bde., 82nd Abn. Div. was deployed to Iraq as part of Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve to advise and assist Iraqi Security Forces in their fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Cody Quinn, CJTF-OIR Public Affairs)



Iraqi army soldiers with 73rd Brigade, 15th Division, watch U.S. Army Soldiers with 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division (center) demonstrate how to react to an ambush using dirt and water bottle caps during a training event at Camp Taji, Iraq, March 24, 2015. The 3rd Bde., 82nd Abn. Div. was

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deployed to Iraq as part of Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve to advise and assist Iraqi Security Forces in their fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Cody Quinn, CJTF-OIR Public Affairs)



An Iraqi Army soldier with the 72nd Brigade, 15th Iraqi Army Division, simulates shooting at the enemy during a combined training exercise at Camp Taji, Iraq, March 22, 2015. The fire behind the soldier produced smoke to create a realistic battlefield environment during the exercise. There are currently 4,800 Iraqi troops in training at four building partner capacity sites in Iraq, with 3,000 of those troops entering training three weeks ago. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Cody Quinn, CJTF-OIR Public Affairs)



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An Iraqi army soldier with the 72nd Brigade, 15th Division, points out the bullet holes on a target as a U.S. paratrooper with 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, makes a gesture indicating how much he needs to adjust his rifle sight during a marksmanship range at Camp Taji, Iraq, April 8, 2015. Soldiers with the 82nd Abn. Div. are assisting IA soldiers with marksmanship training and urban operations during their deployment as part of Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve. (Photo by Sgt. Cody Quinn, CJTF-OIR Public Affairs)

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